

PARISH OF SPALDWICK

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at 8 pm Thursday 29 April 2010 at Spaldwick Primary School

Present: Councillors W F Brown (Chairman), G Leach, G Rice, G Smith, R Wooddisse, the Clerk (Mr D Stowell), and 9 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** – B Plummer
2. **Minutes of meeting held 30 April 2009** were read, approved and signed.

3. **Matters arising**

Valve in drainage ditch east of Spaldwick Petrol Station

The Clerk reported that within the last few days the ditch had been cleared around the valve by an unknown person but silt was still preventing it from closing completely. However it did not appear to be broken as the Highways Agency contractor had suggested. A permanent solution to the problem will be sought as soon as possible.

4. **Annual report by Chairman of Parish Council**

The Parish Council has held 11 meetings in the year plus the Annual Parish Meeting and a Special Meeting to appoint the grass cutting contractor for 2010.

The Council has had only three planning applications to deal with and one planning matter which reflects the current economic climate.

During the year the Parish Plan has been brought together, adopted by the Parish Council and published with a copy being delivered to all households. It was presented at the village fete on 11 July and caused a lot of interest. The Action Plan has since been adopted by the Council and groups of volunteers are to be formed to focus on particular areas of concern, initially these being provision of facilities for the youth of the village, reduction of speed through the village and provision of a village hall. I would like to offer the Parish Council's thanks to the Steering Group Committee for all their effort in producing the Parish Plan for Spaldwick. The plan will be presented by Cambridgeshire ACRE to the Police, Health Authority etc at a future North West Huntingdonshire Neighbourhood Panel meeting.

June saw the arrival of around 15 vehicles and caravans along Cockway Lane and the Three Shires Way and at times blocking it. Mr Wooddisse and I had numerous discussions with the Enforcement Officer who acted quickly and served the relevant Notices immediately. However it still took two weeks before the vehicles left and a big cleaning up operation was needed to restore the area - although rubbish still remains to this day. The Parish Council is looking at ways to prevent this from happening again.

The Jointly Funded Minor Improvement Scheme Bid for 2010-11 for interactive signs on approaches to the village proved too costly and schemes for 30mph markings on the road and for a footway along the High Street are still being requested.

The War Memorial is in need of cleaning and re-lettering and hopefully this will be concluded in the near future.

The big Freeze caused problems in the village and surrounding areas especially when HDC cut back on gritting areas. However I think the village coped well on the whole with these adverse conditions.

Dog Fouling and Litter continue to be a big problem in the village with dog mess around the school and Ferriman Road being particularly bad. The clerk wrote a piece for February's edition of Spaldwick News and signs warning of penalties for dog fouling have been renewed around the village. Also despite Mr Stowell's best efforts litter is still a problem so there is more to be done to improve these areas.

The Parish Council has had two vacancies to fill with the resignations of Mr Keith Armer and Mr Jason Pope. These positions have been filled by Mr Grahame Leach and Mr Greg Rice.

During the year we have distributed the Christmas Charity money to six residents in Spaldwick and the council made contributions to the Churchyard maintenance costs and to Spaldwick Newsletter costs.

To conclude my report I would like to thank all the councillors for their work on the Parish Council and in particular Mr Plummer and Mr Pope for their input on the Parish Plan, Mr Johnson and Mr Wooddisse for delivering the Christmas Charity, Mr Smith for helping with the finances, and Mr Leach and Mr Rice for their work on the Village Hall Management Committee.

My biggest thanks goes to Mr Stowell for all his work in guiding the Parish Council through the year. On Radio Four's "The Archers" it has been noted that Ambridge's Parish Council meetings proceed without their clerk. I'm glad to say this is not the case here as David has been a big help to me. Thank You.

5. **Parish Council Financial Report for year ended 31 March 2010**

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year 2009/2010, summarised as follows:-

	Parish Council Fund	Charity Fund
Balance brought forward at 1/4/09	£51748.02	£120.00
Receipts	£10448.07	£120.00
Payments	£ 7965.67	£120.00
Balance carried forward at 31/3/10	£54230.42	£120.00

The Parish Council balance at 31 March 2010 is allocated as follows:-

Village Hall & Playing Field project	£25000.00
Ferriman Road Grounds Maintenance Fund	£19798.37
Parish Plan Grant	£ 176.36
General Reserve	£ 9255.69

6. **Reports from other village organisations**

Village Hall Greg Rice reported that a new Management Committee had been elected at an Extraordinary General Meeting held in December 2009. The Committee has identified a preferred site and is seeking advice from the Parish Council as to its availability. They are looking at various types of building. Before any final decision is taken a public meeting will be held to discuss the plans and to seek agreement from those present.

Carpet Bowls Club Graham Smith reported that the club had 24 members with an average attendance of about 16. More members would be welcomed. In the past year they have won all the away matches. The club had also held a barbeque and a 10 pin bowling session.

7. **Open Forum**

Mr Armer queried the choice of the public open space (POS) behind Ferriman Road as the preferred site for the Village Hall and asked whether the site behind the school had now been rejected by the Planning Authority. Mr Rice, a member of the Village Management Committee (VHMC), confirmed that this is the case.

Mr Armer went on to say that in his opinion the POS would not provide adequate parking, which would result in cars having to park in the surrounding streets if the Hall were to be used by people from outside the village. Local residents will complain about this problem coupled with noise likely to be created by hall users. Mr Rice replied that the Business Plan would address the question of parking, but one advantage of a small car park is that it would encourage people living in the village to walk to the hall.

The Chairman, Mr Brown, then made the following statement explaining the position of the Parish Council in respect of the query raised by the new VHMC regarding the possible use of this site, which had been given by the developers of the new estate for use as public open space in a Planning Act S.106 agreement:-

In January 2010 the HDC Planning Service Manager confirmed that he is looking into the question of the POS at Ferriman Road as a possible site for a Village Hall.

In February HDC Planning Department held a progress meeting on using the POS and stated that will likely be referred to the Legal Department at HDC.

In March the matter was referred back to the Parish Council with advice that the PC seeks its own legal advice. This was done by referring the question to the National Association of Parish Council's Legal Department. The Parish Council is still awaiting a response from NALC, pending which it is unable to make a decision regarding use of this site.

Residents of Ferriman Road raised questions regarding the case for putting money towards the project. One said that the Community Room is not fully used and some events at the school have been cancelled due to lack of interest; why would a Village Hall be better? Mr Armer said that he believes the village has proved that it does want a Village Hall and that the school does not provide the facilities that a village hall would.

Mr Rice again assured the meeting that the VHMC would consult with villagers via a public meeting before final decisions are taken.

Mr Armer congratulated the Parish Council in getting help from the District / County Councils in removing the caravan encampment in Cockway Lane, but pointed out that problems are also caused by others using the lane irresponsibly and these need to be addressed.

8. **Thanks to past Chairman, current Chairman and Clerk**

Mr Brown gave a small present to Mr Keith Armer as a token of appreciation from the Parish Council for his 19 years of service as a member of the Council, 15 of which were as Chairman.

Mr Wooddisse expressed thanks to Mr Brown for all the work he had done as Chairman of the Parish Council during the past year. He also thanked the Clerk for his work in the past year.

In the absence of any other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm